



Flu is clever, flu is highly contagious - flu is not a cold! Children, the elderly and those with chronic illnesses are most at risk.

Don't be complacent and think... 'it's only flu'!

Prevent the spread of Flu GET THE JAB

For more information on infection prevention and control in practice visit www.healthcare2z.org



Prevent the spread of Flu GET THE JAB

A vaccine is available to provide some protection against influenza virus types A and B.

The vaccination is free of charge in the UK and is offered to the following groups:

- those aged over 65
- individuals living in elderly care homes
- carers of elderly or disabled individuals whose welfare would suffer if the carer became ill
- those over six months old that have a chronic condition such as a heart problem, asthma or diabetes
- those with chronic liver disease
- immunosuppressed individuals due to disease or treatment.

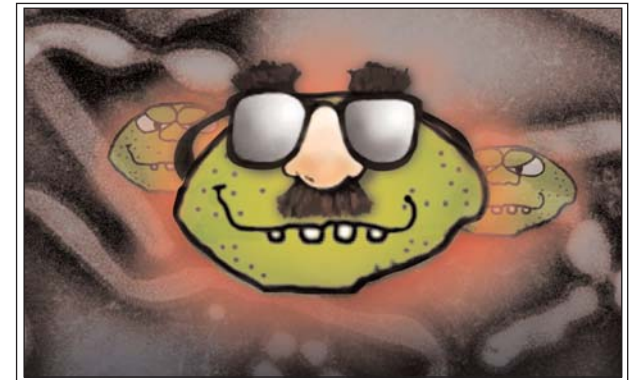
The vaccine is given via injection as a single dose in adults and children over the age of 13 years. Children under the age of 13 years, having the vaccine for the first time, are given it as two doses, 4 to 6 weeks apart.

The vaccine should not be given to people who have had an anaphylactic reaction to a previous dose, (or any part of the vaccine), or to anyone known to have a severe allergic reaction to egg products (as flu vaccines are prepared in hens' eggs). It also should not be given to pregnant women unless absolutely necessary.

This content is not intended nor does it replace individual professional advice. Please contact a healthcare professional or seek advice from NHS Direct (0845 46 47) NHS Direct Wales (0845 46 47) or NHS 24 in Scotland (08454 24 24 24).



ONLY FLU!



Don't be fooled by familiarity.

You know the name, but do you know the nature of flu?



FLU FACTS

Influenza (commonly known as flu) is an acute viral disease affecting the upper respiratory tract, caused by the influenza virus. The three main strains of the influenza virus are A, B and C and these are known to mutate over time.

Transmission

Flu is highly infectious and is easily transmitted via airborne particles.

It may also be transmitted through direct contact as the virus can survive out of the body for many hours, particularly in cold and low humidity environments.

The influenza virus can periodically cause a pandemic. Pandemic flu is generally caused by a new strain of influenza virus that can quickly spread through populations around the world.

Incubation

The incubation period of the virus is about 2 to 3 days.

Illness

The symptoms of influenza include:

- sudden onset of fever
- sweats
- muscle aches
- headache
- dry chesty cough
- sneezing
- runny or blocked nose
- problems with sleeping.

Babies or small children suffering from flu may also suffer from poor feeding and be drowsy, unresponsive, limp or floppy.

Influenza symptoms generally peak within 2 to 3 days and the individual starts to feel better within 5 to 8 days. The cough and general tiredness may, however, last up to 2 to 3 weeks.

The symptoms of pandemic flu are the same but are generally much more severe.

Treatment

In normal healthy individuals, no specific treatment is usually prescribed as influenza is generally a self-limiting disease and a full recovery is very common.

Therapy focuses on alleviating the symptoms, such as drinking plenty of fluids, reducing the temperature with paracetamol and cool baths, and resting.

Antiviral treatments, such as zanamivir and oseltamivir, are available for high-risk groups. These do not cure the disease but reduce the severity and duration of the infection and associated symptoms.

Exclusion

Although individuals are infectious before symptoms appear, it is recommended that they remain isolated until the symptoms have cleared.

Notification

Flu is not a notifiable disease.

Complications

The risk of developing further complications or a serious form of the infection increases in the following groups:

- the elderly or the very young
- people with other medical conditions, such as heart or lung disease, diabetes or the immunocompromised
- people living in residential nursing homes.

Complications that may develop following an infection with the influenza virus include a bacterial chest infection, pyrexia, acute bronchitis, encephalitis or pneumonia.

Prevention

A vaccine is available to help prevent the spread of influenza virus types A and B. To help reduce the spread of the virus, avoid visiting crowded places when suffering from the symptoms. Wash hands frequently, and cover the mouth and nose with a tissue when sneezing and dispose of it carefully.